MAN BEHIND THE SPOT LIGHT

MAN ARTIST OF VAUDEVILLE THE PUBLIC OVERLOOKS.

Where Would the Stars Be if It Were Not for Men Like Edward Walsh?—And Suppose the Trap Drummer Didn't Catch the Falls?—Property Man Too.

There are three men in the vaudeville theatres whose work, important as it undoubtedly is, is either overlooked entirely by the people in front or rated at much below its par. These three men are the spot light artist, the trap drummer and the man who fills in small parts.

But if the public, seated in boxes and orchestra chairs, are blind to their worth, applauding only those who have advertised salaries and electric light visiting cards, the three men do not themselves underrate their own importance. Neither do the gallery gods, who occasionally give them a hand and an appreciative "Bully gee!" Their admiring regard is about all the men get out of their artistic work, so they say—that and their week's salary.

At least this is what Edward Walsh, who works the spot at the Colonial Theatre, intimates. He has a moment to spare now and then, when an act is on which demands a full light, and in the interval of pushing pink and purple gelatine films into place he airs his grievances and his pride in his work.

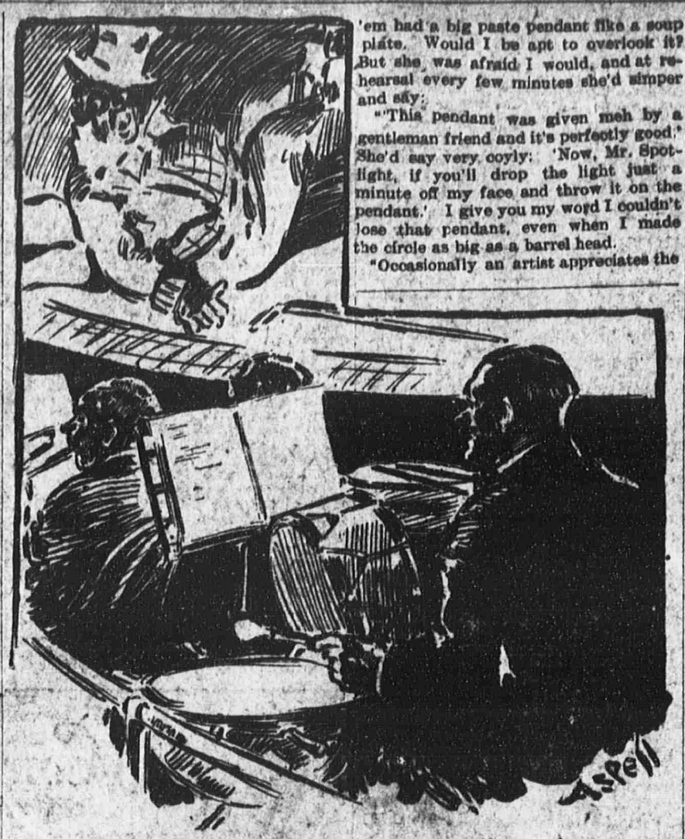
"My, but some of 'em are a hard lot!" he vouchsafes. "They just want a spot light every old minute of the time, and they want it so hot that it nearly blinds 'em!

"You know the smaller the light is the stronger it is, and there are a lot of them artists who really suffer because they'd like to have the spot so small that it just picks out their faces, and yet they can't stand it full in the eyes. Talk about the hardships of one night stands and all that! The only real tragedy in the artist's life as I see it is that he can't have the spot as strong as he'd like it—that's what!"

Walsh slips again into his chair for a few moments while Clarice Mayne, the English music hall singer, offers some of her musical wares. She has on an 1850 gown and the light flickers about it until the ruffles and lines are properly displayed. Then it centres on her face and stays there.

He is congratulated on his dexterity and waves aside the praise with a Bryanic abandon of gesture. He shows also that he is critically observant:

"I never saw an English music hall singer that didn't have prominent upper teeth. I wonder why it is?—and I try to chase the spot across her face so they won't stand out too much. But she's easy compared with some. There ain't really but one thing for a spot man to fear with an artist of her class, and that is that she'll get away from you."



THE TRAP DRUMMER CATCHING A FALL.

Being a man of concentrated ideas, Walsh ignores the pleasantry that women are often like that and throws more light on the subject by saying:

"Yes, the secret of the spot light artist's profession is to keep 'em in the centre of it. Just the minute you let 'em get near the edge they'll topple over and then it may take you a good while to pick 'em up again while the boys give you the merry ha ha, and the artists themselves—well, they just soak yer."

A second pleasantry is made along the same obvious lines and Walsh ignores that too. It's discouraging, but what can you do?

"Now with an artist like Miss Mayne you don't have to bother about her feet at all. If you don't show 'em she won't kick. But you must show her face, because she works with that.

"Sometimes the actresses have diamonds and a spot man that forgets an actress's diamonds had better get busy with some other profession. He ain't needed where he is. There was one of 'em had a big paste pendant like a soup plate. Would I be apt to overlook it? But she was afraid I would, and at rehearsal every few minutes she'd simper and say:

"'This pendant was given meh by a gentleman friend and it's perfectly good.' She'd say very coyly: 'Now, Mr. Spotlight, if you'll drop the light just a minute off my face and throw it on the pendant.' I give you my word I couldn't lose that pendant, even when I made the circle as big as a barrel head.

"Occasionally an artist appreciates the work you do. It ain't often, but it does occur. When Eva Tanguey played here she was very particular, what we call a fidgetty actress, and you couldn't slouch in your work a minute. I didn't know whether she was pleased or not, but at the end of her engagement she sent me a fiver and asked the stage manager if he'd let me go to the Brooklyn house with her. I went to the Orpheum and turned the spot on her for a week with marked success. I appreciated her appreciation very much.

"Every Monday morning there is a rehearsal. I get my directions then in the form of a light plot, which is furnished the stage manager with the property plot and other directions, and I have to follow those directions exactly or any changes in them which the manager makes.

"There is usually a light plot for every act. For instance, in a pianologue sketch or one of the freehand crayon drawings you must show the hands rather than the face and when the artist has finished a picture you must show it in a purple glow and a pink flush and dawn effect and not bother with him at all until the applause is over and he steps forward to the stage centre and then you get to work and throw it on to his surprised and startled face, where anxiety and a shrinking dread of public scrutiny are visible, and you turn it on so strong that he has to go out afterward and find a dark corner to sit in until he can see the same as ever again.

"I had a hard act to follow with a trained animal show where the monkey gave a skirt dance and had to have a red spot. My, but he did meve like lightning, and I nearly lost him two or three times. Another difficult one was the Rip Van Winkle dance, where I had to meet the artist at his entrance with a very small green spot that just picked out his face and had to keep him in that while he scurried all over the place for ten or fifteen minutes. Perhaps you think that's easy.

"Two dollars a performance is the union rates, but there is what is called tip money, which the spotlight man often expects and often keeps on expecting. That's been my experience. Artists are awfully grateful before they begin their week's work. They'll put it up to you this way: 'Now, you work with us all right an we won't forget you when Sunday night comes.'

"When Sunday night comes and the curtain's rung down for the last time on their act they very likely say nothing at all, but just sneak off. They don't remember you're alive even. Then when they come around the next year and the spotlight don't pick 'em up just as quick and as thoroughly as they think it ought they accuse you of trying to ruin their act. Hard, ain't it?"

Walsh remarks that during the time he has worked the spot he has noticed a great change in vaudeville.

"There was a time," he explains, "when the ordinary footlights and border lights were sufficient for an actor. The man who sang topical songs for instance didn't need anything else. Now he asks for the spot all the time and says that his songs cannot be understood unless his facial expression is emphasized by the spot. Mebbe so! I dunno!

"Of course they don't all of 'em get all the spot they'd like but they get more'n they oughter have. The vaudeville artist sends his property plot ahead and usually asks for a palace setting; the poorer artists they are the more they insist on playing in a palace interior; nothing else will suit 'em.

"But the stage manager's on. He knows just who they are and what they'll get and very likely he reads the request and says to the property man: 'You just set this scene with a plain cottage interior, give 'em three chairs and a square table.' But the point is that by insisting on having a palace set, they may get one gilt chair thrown into the heap. And the same way when they ask for the spot all the time, with a lot of directions about dawn and high noon and twilight; they may get the spot for one moment when they reach the climax of the play.

"Funny, but they never make a fuss. When they see the three chairs and the table instead of the palace set they know the stage manager knows 'em and the property man knows 'em and the spot light artist and that the audience will pretty soon."

Walsh recalls many humorous incidents of spotlight life. One he tells of a young boy who had served as apprentice to a spotlight man of his acquaintance and when the man was taken ill one night the boy got his chance.

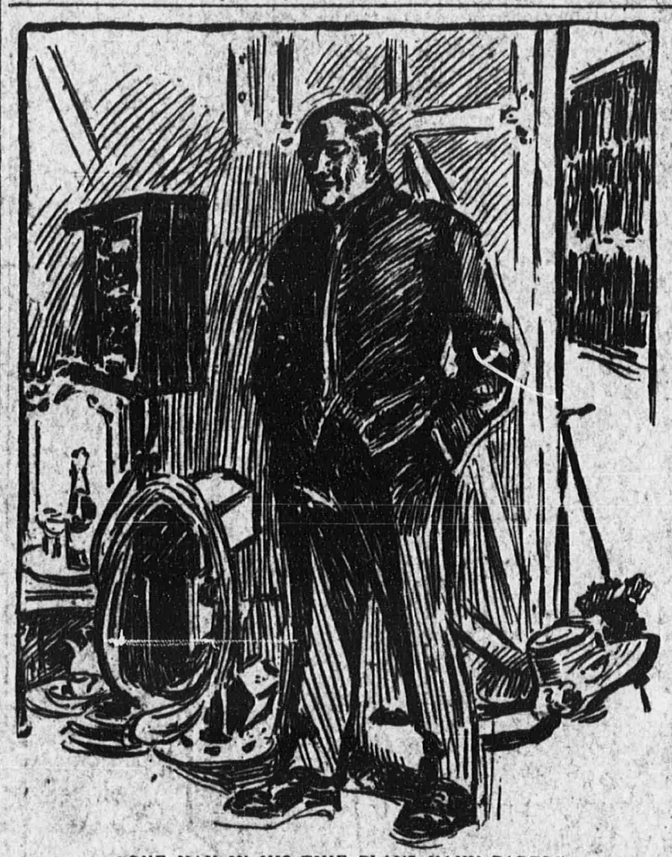
"Might have made a great spotlight artist," says Walsh, "if he hadn't been tied up with a woman—they'll spoil a man's career right off the bat.

"This young chap was gone, completely gone, over a chorus girl and instead of turning the spot on the artist who was doing the stunt, he shifted it about till he picked out that little, ornery chorus girl that stood on the back and nobody had ever heard of. He not only picked her out, but he kept the spot on her and wouldn't budge it a bit. He lost his place and so did she. Oh, yes, they got married. They were sure to.

"It's a pretty good thing for a spotlight artist to remember that if you don't get the star and keep him he'll get you all right."

If the trap drummer is second in importance to the spotlight man he does not admit it; and it is the opinion of Julius Lenzberg, who leads the orchestra at one of the vaudeville houses, that the trap drummer is about as necessary an adjunct of the playhouse as you can find. He is essentially a vaudeville product, for except on rare occasions the legitimate theatre has no use for his peculiar work—work that is supposed to embrace the whole gamut of sounds from the mere beating of the drum and clashing of cymbals to the cry of a lonesome black cat on a back fence at midnight. He introduces Anthony Marsch, one of the cleverest of his class.

Marsch admits that if a trap drummer wants to hold his place it's up to him to know how to devise a rooster's crow or a baby's cry and that the majority of the trap drummers, himself included, invent their own instruments. His collection looks like the bargain counter of a ten cent store and his dexterity puts to



"ONE MAN IN HIS TIME PLAYS MANY PARTS."

shame the man on the street corner who plays six instruments at the same time and has breath enough left to call for contributions.

"The important part of the trap drummer's work," he says, "is catching the falls, as they call it. That means that he mustn't be one second behindhand when the slapstick artist hits the stage. And he must be able to give a different sound for every different kind of a fall, from the one face down to the slower fall where the man stubs his toe and goes down by degrees.

"Any one who has seen the sketch of Rice and Prebort has a very good example of the trap drummer's work. These comedians are constantly in action and the trap drummer is every moment catching a fall. They are working hard all the time to get laughs and continually adding on new work and you must be right with them.

"Some of the trap drummers get mean occasionally, think perhaps they haven't been treated right in regard to the tip money, and they'll give an artist a fall just a moment too soon or too late. It's a good way to pay up old scores, but it don't really round up in the end, for a real trap drummer is an artist and he isn't going to spoil his reputation for any such cause as that.

"The ordinary instruments he uses are the drums, the cymbals, castanets, triangles, tambourines and various kinds of calls that imitate the street cries and those of the barnyard and the zoo."

Marsch has a rooster crow that connoisseurs pronounce perfect of its kind. It is a piece of tin shaped like a pitcher with a spout that is breathed through. The baby cry is made of a horn shaped piece of wood that is blown through softly. Once the trap drummer used the rooster crow when he should have taken the baby cry, but he does not dwell on that purple moment in his past.

The trap drummer's repertoire does not include the clatter of horses' hoofs, which is made in the wings with a couple of pieces of cocoanut shell knocked on a marble slab, nor the thunder, made by a clapper pendent from a piece of iron; all else he is cheerfully responsible for.

He does not complain of the lack of appreciation.

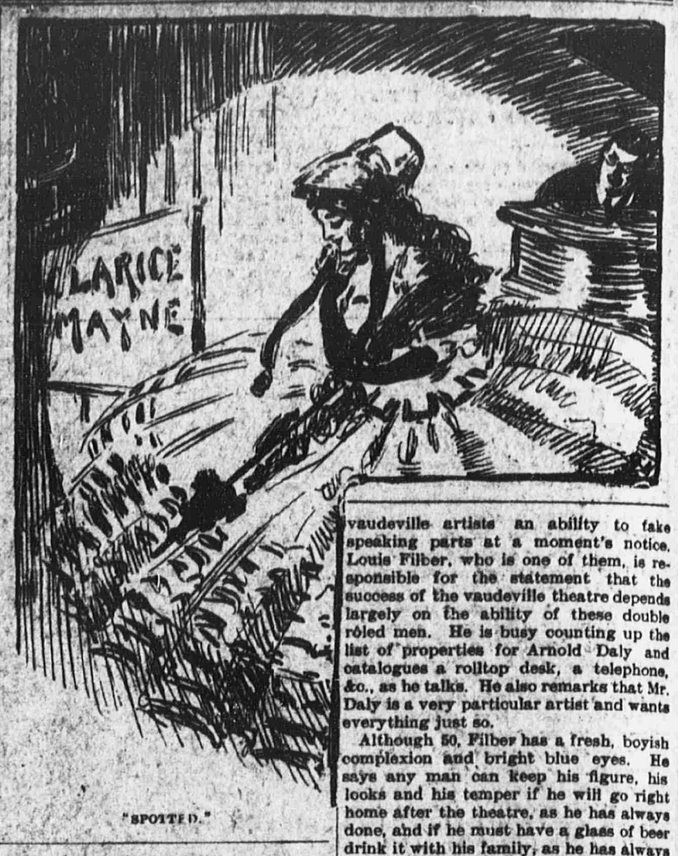
"There is a lot of people I know," he remarks, "who get their seats near the drum just to watch my work, and they keep pretty close tabs too. I'm especially popular with children and with musicians who have the trained ear and show pretty plainly when they think I ought to have got in with a fall a sixtieth part of a second sooner than I did.

"I am continually experimenting with instruments and study all sorts of sounds carefully. After a while you get so that when you are walking along the street and hear a peculiar noise you are asking yourself how it could be made.

"The vaudeville audiences are queer in this respect. If they should hear a rooster crow anywhere near their homes like as not they would write immediately to the Board of Health asking to have the nuisance removed, but when I use the rooster crow in the theatre they look at each other and say 'Isn't that natural?' and many a time they applaud.

"It's just the same way with children. Many of them won't live in an apartment house where children are allowed, but they will come to the theatre and when the baby cry is given you would think that it was the sweetest sound in the world to them."

The third of this trio of unsung heroes is the property man, who adds to the onerous duties of finding the necessary chattels required by the plots of the



"SPOTTED."

vaudeville artists an ability to fake speaking parts at a moment's notice. Louis Filber, who is one of them, is responsible for the statement that the success of the vaudeville theatre depends largely on the ability of these double rôled men. He is busy counting up the list of properties for Arnold Daly and catalogues a rolltop desk, a telephone, &c., as he talks. He also remarks that Mr. Daly is a very particular artist and wants everything just so.

Although 50, Filber has a fresh, boyish complexion and bright blue eyes. He says any man can keep his figure, his looks and his temper if he will go right home after the theatre, as he has always done, and if he must have a glass of beer drink it with his family, as he has always done. Considering the fact that he has played in all sixty-seven different rôles his advice concerning longevity seems worth repeating.

"When the Monday morning rehearsal is called," he says, "I never know what I'll be for the week. I may simply run 'cross stage with an ambulance, as I did for Charlotte Parry, the lightning change artist, this afternoon. I may be a policeman, a newsboy, a carpenter, stage driver or best man at a wedding.

"The sketches played in vaudeville are owned by the artists and they usually call for a small part. Of course the management is not compelled to furnish this, but there is a sort of understanding that they will, just as there is in regard to the costumes. Any special costume they must provide, but the regular costumes, like a policeman's, a laborer's overalls and truck like that are always to be found and lent for the asking.

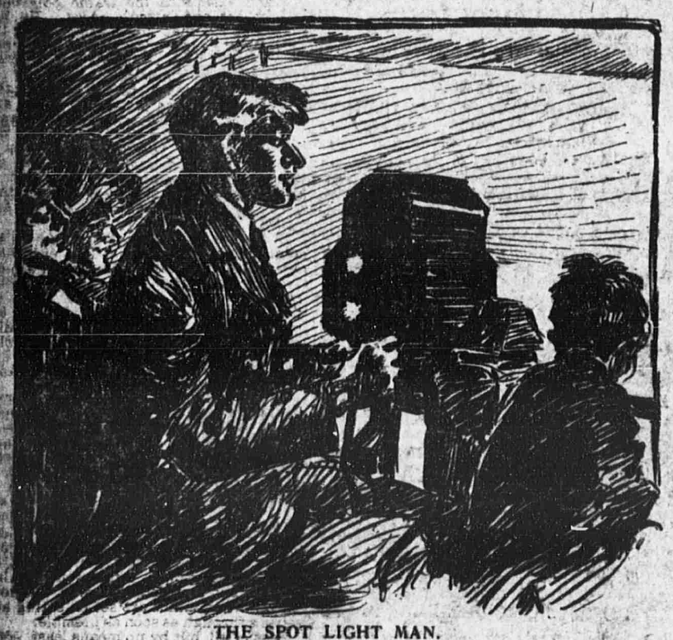
"My shortest part was in a sketch given by Look and Fulton. One of the characters said to me: 'Has she come?' and I said, 'Yes, sir'—just that, nothing more. But you see it was important in a way for if I had forgotten and repeated what I had said the week before, when my answer was 'Not at all,' think of the confusion that might have resulted.

"The property man doesn't get anything extra from the manager of the vaudeville house for filling in these parts, but the artists themselves usually give him a small sum, whatever their generosity determines. Sometimes they forget, and when they do on the next year's circuit they are very apt to look around in vain for the filler-in—the property man is tremendous busy, and the word having gone about, there is more or less trouble, usually more.

"Most of the property men who move about from one vaudeville house to another in the course of years play with most of the big actors. I have filled in with John T. Raymond, John McCullough, Robert Mantell. With Harrigan and Hart I had a part as a wharf rat that required me to learn sixty-two pages in all—that was a part.

"One season I travelled on a steamer on the Ohio River and we played in all the towns on the way. I was just turned 14 then, the folks had died and I had to shift for myself.

"You usually begin by carrying water and then you rise higher and higher until you get to be a property man, and then there isn't any other life for you. It was Shakespeare who said—wasn't it?—that 'One man in his time plays many parts.' I believe he must have been thinking of the property man."



THE SPOT LIGHT MAN.

WHAT WOMEN ARE DOING.

At the organization of the National College Equal Suffrage League the other day in Buffalo Dr. M. Carey Thomas of Bryn Mawr was chosen president.

Mrs. Elizabeth George Henderson, who read a paper at the recent meeting of the North Carolina Peace Congress held in Greensboro, said that she had written to the heads of the associations of the Daughters of the Confederacy in the different States asking their attitude with regard to the objects of the congress. Without exception they had declared themselves in favor of peace by arbitration. Mrs. Henderson was formerly president-general of the United Daughters of the Confederacy.

Prof. Frances Squire Potter, whose paper read before the Buffalo convention for equal suffrage attracted much attention, is the mother of four children. Besides her work as professor of English at the University of Minnesota she finds time to do considerable writing. She has just completed her second novel, has written a successful play and is frequently called upon to lecture on economic subjects.

Miss Ethel Jenney has just been admitted to practice law in the United States Circuit Court in Boston. She is a graduate of Radcliffe College and of the Michigan State University Law School. She has practised law in the Federal courts of Michigan and is now connected with a law firm in Boston.

Miss Julia Morrow has gone to Cincinnati to assume charge of the work of establishing a school to train young men and women to become rescue and purity workers. She is the corresponding secretary of the National Purity Federation.

Miss Ethel M. Colford and Miss Florence M. Colford, twin sisters, have been practising lawyers in Washington for years and have just been admitted to practice before the Supreme Court of the United States.

The Rev. Dr. Antoinette L. B. Blackwell met a young woman at the recent national suffrage convention in Buffalo for whose grandparents she performed the marriage ceremony. The marriage took place in 1835, the year that Dr. Blackwell was ordained, and was the first at which she officiated. Both Miss Anthony and the Rev. William Ellery Channing were present, and Dr. Channing on being invited to assist in the marriage ceremony refused, saying he wished to have it all done by a woman.

Mrs. Clarence H. Mackay has taken five boxes for the mass meeting which the Interurban Political Equality League has arranged for Mrs. Phillip Snowden, the British suffragette. This meeting is to be held in Carnegie Hall on December 5. Mr. Aked, the pastor of the Fifth Avenue Baptist Church, will also speak on that occasion. Though he was a worker for woman suffrage in England, this will be his first appearance in behalf of the cause in this country. He has heretofore refused to speak on the subject since coming to this country, giving as his reason that he did not know the conditions here.

Miss Anna Quinby, secretary of the State Loyal Temperance Legion of Ohio, recently acted as attorney for the prosecution in a larceny case in Edenton, Ohio. Miss Jane Purcell, another young woman lawyer, acted as counsel for the defence. It is called the first case in Ohio in which both attorneys were women.

The Rev. Anna H. Shaw recently performed the ceremony at the wedding of Miriam, adopted daughter of Mrs. Rachel Foster Avery, to Arthur Raymond Kinney. The bride wore a dress made from the train of the dress worn by Mrs. Avery twenty-five years ago when she was presented at court in London with Miss Anthony. Mrs. Avery also wore a historic costume, the black satin dress worn by Miss Anthony in Baltimore at the last national suffrage convention that she ever attended.

Mrs. Mary E. Hart, formerly of Los Angeles, has the distinction of being the first person to stake a mining claim on a glacier while it was moving. As Mrs. Hart was returning from her most recent trip to the Klondike a landing was made for the first time in nine years at Muir Glacier, near Skagway. Mrs. Hart was the first to step ashore, and finding that the moraine was freighted with precious ore she promptly staked off a claim. Mrs. Hart has passed a number of years in Alaska and has owned and superintended the work on several claims.

Dr. Elizabeth Athman of Gottheimer is the first woman to be elected teacher in a night school in the German Empire. She entered upon her duties at the beginning of the present school season in Frankfort. Fräulein Athman is well known in Germany on account of her original investigations upon sociological subjects. She has written and lectured extensively upon the condition of the workingwomen, especially those employed in the factories and shops of Germany. As she has lived among the women about whom she lectures and writes and knows thoroughly their condition, she is looked upon as the leading authority on the subject and especially well fitted to act as their teacher in night school.

According to the latest equal suffrage census there are more women members of school committees in Massachusetts than any other State in the Union. The little town of Holden leads with four women upon its school board. Fall River, Attleboro, Melrose, Sharon and Woburn each have three. Thirty other towns have each two women members on their school committees, while seventy-six towns and cities show one woman representative on each board.

Mrs. Eva Perry Moore, at a meeting held in connection with the International Tuberculosis Congress, which recently closed in Washington, pledged the cooperation of the General Federation of Women's Clubs to the anti-tuberculosis movement. The clubwomen have already begun to organize a department for the purpose of carrying on a far reaching educational campaign. They will begin with the present school system and will endeavor to combat the theory that the disease is inherited, to insist on measures for the prevention of contagion and to teach that wholesome ways of living will help to eradicate the disease. Above all, they will try to make parents understand that the great fundamental preventive is to keep their children in the open air

A FLOATING OIL SHOP.

William Ellis and His Stationary Tank Ship in the Bronx Kills.

The workmen who handle high explosives may feel anxiety while at work, but William Ellis, who keeps the 8,100 gallons of kerosene and lubricating oils and a few hundred gallons of gasolene in a little barge on the Bronx Kills, is in quite as dangerous a predicament. In the little gray colored barge moored to one of the green, moss covered spiles which at one time formed part of the foundation of Murray's dock the gasolene man keeps his shop.

It is a small barge, about 20 by 30 feet, covered over by a wooden shed. The three tanks are inside the shed and half of each tank runs down into the lower part of the barge. Each tank has a capacity of 1,000 and some gallons.

A man who was bound out on a fishing trip asked Ellis if he ever felt uneasy aboard the barge.

"Never," said he. "Why should I when I know that you have only got to cash in once in this world?"

"Well, what chance would you have to get away?"

"You see, in such an emergency as a fire the best thing I could do would be to jump overboard and swim against the tide. Not with it, because the least flame in this shed would cause an explosion and the oils would burn on the water and be carried in the direction the tide was running."

Whenever one of the power launches comes near the barge all pipes and cigars must be extinguished. A lighted cigar might be the means of sending tanks and barge skyward.

A STRAD FOR MANEN.

Chosen by Spanish Crown to Receive Fiddle Sarasate Used.

When Queen Isabella of Spain gave to the ten-year-old Pablo Sarasate the famous Stradivarius on which he played for many years it was on the condition that after his death it was to be returned to the Crown of Spain, which should, in turn, bestow it on the most deserving of the violinists of the day. The fiddle has duly been given back to the Government, which is expected now to present it to Juan Manen, the foremost violinist of Spain. Manen is the composer of the opera "Acte," recently produced with success in Dresden by Ernst Schuch.

Virtuosos who are constantly lamenting the rate at which fine instruments are passing into the possession of museums will have further cause for regret because Sarasate gave his other Strad to the museum of the Conservatoire in Paris. He left a large fortune, for he had been playing more than thirty years, during the greater part of which he exercised great drawing power on the public wherever he went.

It is a curious fact that in the last few years of his career he accepted much smaller sums than were formerly paid to him. This was true even in Germany, where he had perhaps his greatest popularity.

The explanation of his continued activity under such conditions is found in his love for playing. He had no resources outside his violin. He never read, and it has been said that he rarely wrote a letter. He had nothing to interest him but his art. Therefore he continued to play.

His habitual melancholy of appearance has been attributed to a tragedy in his early life. When his appearances at the court of Madrid had determined his career he set out for Paris with his mother to become a student at the Conservatoire. At a small village near the frontier she was taken ill with cholera. She had only her son to watch her during the night she lay ill and he was alone for a day with her body before assistance came. His later success never obliterated from his mind the experiences through which he passed on the frontier.

He had little use for this country. Americans alone remained cold to him. When he came the first time, just as when he returned with Eugen d'Albert, there was little enthusiasm over him. He travelled for years with Bertha Marx Goldschmidt as his accompanist and her husband as his secretary and manager. They were his devoted friends, and to their daughter he left his beautiful villa at Biarritz.

Sarasate had written a method for the instrument with which he won fame and was on the point of sending it to a publisher a short time before his death. Then he suddenly decided that authors and not musicians should write books and destroyed the work.

Observers have noted that within the last thirteen months three great violinists, Joachim, Wilhelmj and Sarasate, have passed away, while Wieniawski, Ole Bull and Vieuxtemps also died within a year.

White Lettuce and Green Cabbage.

From the St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

"There is a curious difference," says a gentleman of St. Louis who spent a large part of the summer in England, "between the English and ourselves in the way of growing cabbage and lettuce for the table. With us the cabbage is encouraged to form a head, and when the leaves show a disposition to spread the gardeners sometimes tie a string around the clump to make the leaves grow together. In England, on the other hand, the efforts of the growers are directed toward keeping cabbage green, and they pull the leaves apart so as to expose all portions to the light and give them a dark, rich color.

"We like our lettuce green, but the English want theirs headed up and blanched, so as to have it as white as our cabbage; in other words, they simply reverse our practice, and instead of white cabbage and green lettuce they like green cabbage and white lettuce. Of course it is only a matter of taste, but still the difference is rather curious."

Balloon Fell Among Fisher Folk.

From the Captain.

An element of humor characterized one of Mr. Spencer's Indian experiences. One day after making a parachute descent his balloon came down among some fisherfolk, who promptly unpicked the net to use for fishing lines and cut up the balloon itself to make waterproof clothing.